

**National Institute on Disability and  
Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)  
(CFDA No. 84.133)**

## **I. Legislation**

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P.L. 93-112, Title II and Section 311(a), as amended by P.L. 99-506 (29 U.S.C. 760-762a and 777 (a)) (expires September 30, 1997).

## **II. Funding History**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1965	\$20,443,000	1987	\$49,000,000
1970	29,764,000	1988	51,100,000
1975	20,000,000	1989	53,525,000
1980	31,488,000	1990	54,318,000
1981	29,750,000	1991	58,924,000
1982	28,560,000	1992	61,000,000
1983	31,560,000	1993	67,238,000
1984	36,000,000	1994	68,146,000
1985	39,000,000	1995	70,000,000
1986	42,108,000	1996	70,000,000

## **III. Analysis of Program Performance**

### **A. Goals and Objectives**

The goal of this program is to enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to be independent, employed, productive, and integrated into their communities by supporting and disseminating research that is relevant and scientifically sound.

The program supports rehabilitation research and the use of such research to improve the lives of individuals with physical and mental disabilities, especially those with severe disabilities, and provides for the dissemination of information to rehabilitation professionals, individuals with disabilities, and their families about developments in rehabilitation procedures, methods, and devices.

### **B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals**

#### **Services Supported**

At any given time, about 500 studies are under way and 600 training sessions serving approximately 60,000 rehabilitation professionals are conducted annually. The composition of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) program is shown in the table below.

**Table 1**  
**NIDRR Programs, Amount of Funding, and Number of Projects**

	<b>FY 1996 Funding (\$millions)</b>	<b><u>Number of Projects</u></b>	
		<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers	\$23.5	44	47
Rehabilitation Engineering Center	10.8	16	16
Research and Demonstration	4.3	18	17
Utilization and Dissemination	3.4	8	8
Field-Initiated Research	6.7	56	52
Fellowships	0.4	10	13
Innovation Grants	0.0	0	4
Model Spinal Injury	7.0	18	18
Research Training Grants	2.6	15	12
SBIR <u>1/</u>	1.6	18	18
Americans with Disabilities Act	7.5	17	17
Minority Set-aside	0.7	10	10
Other <u>2/</u>	1.0	---	---
Total	70.7	230	232

1/ Small Business Innovative Research.

2/ Includes funding for field readers, consultants, conferences, and printing.

NIDRR funds research and related activities through 10 separate programs. The Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers and Rehabilitation Engineering Centers represent the largest investment of NIDRR resources. Other programs include a directed research and demonstration program, a knowledge diffusion program, field-initiated research, innovation grants, and fellowships. NIDRR is responsible for advanced training in research for physicians and other clinicians and for promoting coordination and cooperation among other federal agencies conducting rehabilitation research through an Interagency Committee on Disability Research. Congress assigned responsibility to NIDRR for supporting regional programs to facilitate the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Congress also has directed NIDRR to maintain a program of model spinal cord injury demonstration projects.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

In FY 1995, specific priorities were funded for Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC) programs in the areas of independent living management, independent living policy, and peer support in long-term mental illness. Priorities were also funded for a Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) in the area of technology for low vision, accessible telecommunications, and technology for children with orthopedic disabilities. NIDRR also funded priorities for discrete projects on accessible postsecondary education and rehabilitation and AIDS as a disability.

In FY 1996 new RRTCs were funded in vocational rehabilitation for blind and vision-impaired individuals and vocational rehabilitation for deaf and hearing-impaired individuals. A new RERC on technology for persons aging with a disability was funded.

Discrete new research and demonstration projects included physical fitness for individuals with disabilities, the emerging universe of disability, women with disabilities, and universal design.

NIDRR has established an integrated planning system for setting goals, developing priorities, and allocating resources over the next five years and beyond. Efforts are also under way to improve the quality of data available on the outcomes and effects of research supported by NIDRR.

### **C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness**

Performance indicators are being developed. No aggregate measures of the impact of research are available, but this program is able to offer many examples of research and dissemination outcomes that qualitatively improve the lives of persons with disabilities. These include the development of methods to overcome restrictions on physical mobility and the establishment of supportive practices permitting fuller participation in community life. Some data also are available about the numbers of fellows and research trainees, their subsequent careers, and their productivity.

## **IV. Planned Studies**

NIDRR is conducting program reviews, intensive midcycle peer reviews of all of its funded Centers (RRTC's and RERC's) and large projects (Model Systems and Technical Assistance Centers). NIDRR is also undertaking various consumer satisfaction surveys.

## **V. Sources of Information**

1. Program files.
2. Evaluation of Fellowships and Research Training Grants (contractor report).

## **VI. Contacts For Further Information**

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